

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for delivering digital content on demand in a multiple unit environment, the system comprising:

a server local to the multiple unit environment, the server including a memory storing the digital content and content metadata about the digital content stored in the memory of the server, and capable of supporting multiple simultaneous asynchronous accesses to the digital content;

a billing system for billing each individual unit based on use of the digital content, the billing system coupled to the server and the content metadata including a plurality of default rates rate for the digital content, and a plurality of custom rates rate for the digital content, and a plurality of rate keys, each rate key associated with at least one of the custom rates; and

at least one access system in a plurality of units in the multiple unit environment, the access system designed to access the digital content stored in the memory on the server; and a user profile including user metadata including at least one of the rate keys;

wherein the billing system is configured to select a rate for the digital content from among the default rates and the custom rates in response to the rate key of the user metadata.

2. (Original) A system according to claim 1, further comprising means for providing simultaneous asynchronous delivery of the digital content from the memory on the server responsive to requests from multiple access systems in the units.

3. (Original) A system according to claim 2, wherein the means for providing simultaneous asynchronous delivery includes software designed to read the digital content from the memory on the server and transmit the digital content to the unit.

4. (Original) A system according to claim 1, further comprising controls for pausing the digital content.

5. (Original) A system according to claim 1, further comprising controls for randomly accessing the digital content.

6. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein the digital content includes content available on an internetwork.

7. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein the digital content includes video.

8. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein the access system includes a set-top box designed to enable access to the digital content, the set-top box coupled to the server and to a display in the unit.

9. (Original) A system according to claim 8, wherein the set-top box is coupled to the server via a switching hub for a network, the switching hub designed to allow a plurality of units to access the server.

10. (Original) A system according to claim 8, wherein the set-top box is designed to allow access to a non-digital content displayed on the display.

11. (Original) A system according to claim 8, wherein the set-top box includes a handset.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, the system further comprising:
a user profile including user metadata; and
means for conditionally accessing the digital content based on an interaction between the content metadata and the user metadata.

14. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein:
the user profile includes a filter; and
the means for conditionally accessing the digital content is designed to deny the digital content to the unit if the content metadata about the digital content does not satisfy the filter.

15. (Original) A system according to claim 14, wherein the user profile is stored in a memory of a second server and is accessible from the server.

16. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein;
the digital content includes video; and
the content metadata includes a rating for the video.

17. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein;
the digital content includes a game; and
the content metadata includes a rating for the game.

18. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein the server includes a user profile including user metadata.

19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein:
the system further comprises a user profile including a rate key; and
the billing system is designed to use the custom rate when the rate key identifies the custom rate.

21. (Original) A system according to claim 20, wherein the user profile is stored in a memory on a second server and is accessible from the server.

22. (Original) A system according to claim 20, the system further comprising means for retrieving the user profile from a memory on a second server and storing the user profile in the memory on the server.

23. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, wherein the billing system further includes a discount rate that can be applied in addition to the default rate or the custom rate.

24. (Original) A system according to claim 1, wherein:
the system further comprises:
a user profile including user metadata; and
an advertisement; and
the server is designed to display the advertisement to the unit when the advertisement matches the user metadata.
25. (Original) A system according to claim 24, wherein the user profile is stored in a memory on a second server and is accessible from the server.
26. (Original) A system according to claim 24, the system further comprising means for retrieving the user profile from a memory on a second server and storing the user profile in the memory on the server.
27. (Original) A system according to claim 24, wherein the advertisement is stored on a second server and accessible from the server.
28. (Original) A system according to claim 24, the system further comprising means for retrieving the advertisement from a second server and storing the advertisement on the server.
29. (Original) A system according to claim 1, the system further comprising a digital content selection apparatus, including:
a profile tracker designed to track an access to a user profile, the user profile including user metadata;
a profile analyzer designed to analyze the user metadata; and
a digital content delivery apparatus designed to offer digital content satisfying the user metadata.
30. (Original) A system according to claim 29, wherein:
the system further comprises content metadata about the digital content; and

the digital content delivery apparatus includes:
a metadata comparator designed to compare the content metadata with the user metadata;
and
a digital content selector designed to select digital content for which the content metadata satisfies the user metadata.

31. (Original) A system according to claim 29, the system further comprising a second server including a memory storing the user profile and the digital content, the second server coupled to the server to provide the digital content to the server.

32. (Original) A system according to claim 1, the system further comprising a second server offsite from the multiple unit environment, the second server coupled to the server to provide digital content to the server.

33. (Original) A system according to claim 1, the system further comprising a user profile updater designed to update user metadata about the user profile.

34. (Previously Presented) A method for delivering digital content, the method comprising:

receiving a request for the digital content from a unit in a multiple unit environment at a server;

accessing the digital content from a memory on the server;

delivering the digital content to the unit, the delivery of the digital content being independent of an asynchronous delivery of a second digital content to a second unit in the multiple unit environment;

accessing a default rate for the digital content;

accessing a custom rate for the digital content;

accessing a rate key from a user profile; and

selecting the default rate or the custom rate for the digital content, based on the rate key.

35. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 34, wherein delivering the digital content includes enabling the unit to access an internetwork, wherein the digital content is digital video content.

36. (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein delivering the digital content includes delivering video to the unit.

37. (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein receiving a request includes receiving a request for the digital content from a set-top box in the unit.

38. (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein delivering the digital content includes:

accessing content metadata about the digital content;

accessing a filter from a user profile; and

delivering the digital content to the unit if the content metadata satisfies the filter.

39. (Original) A method according to claim 38, wherein delivering the digital content further includes denying the digital content if the content metadata does not satisfies the filter.

40. (Original) A method according to claim 38, wherein accessing a filter includes accessing the filter from the user profile stored in a memory on a second server.

41. (Original) A method according to claim 38, wherein:
delivering the digital content includes delivering a video to the unit;
accessing content metadata includes accessing a rating for the video;
accessing a filter includes accessing a maximum allowable rating from the user profile;
and
delivering the digital content includes delivering the video to the unit if the rating is below the maximum allowable rating.

42. (Original) A method according to claim 34, wherein delivering the digital content includes:
accessing content metadata about the digital content;
accessing user metadata from a user profile; and
conditionally delivering the digital content to the unit based on an interaction between the content metadata and the user metadata.

43. (Canceled)

44. (Canceled)

45. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 34, wherein accessing a rate key further comprises:
transferring includes accessing the rate key from the user profile to the server from stored in a memory on a second server outside of the multiple unit environment.

46. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 34, further comprising:
~~applying a discount for the digital content.~~
accessing a discount rate key from the user profile; and
applying a discount to the selected rate based on the discount rate key;
wherein the discount rate key indicates a plurality of discounts for the digital content.

47. (Original) A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising:
accessing user metadata about a user profile; and
selecting an advertisement that matches the user metadata; and
sending the advertisement to the unit.

48. (Original) A method according to claim 47, wherein accessing user metadata includes accessing the user metadata about the user profile stored in a memory on a second server.

49. (Original) A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising sending the digital content from a second server to the server for storage until requested by the unit.

50. (Original) A method according to claim 34, the method further comprising: accessing a bill for the digital content; and displaying the bill in the unit.

51. (Original) A computer-readable medium containing a program to deliver digital content, the program being executable on a computer system to implement the method of claim 34.

52. (Canceled)

53. (Canceled)

54. (Canceled)

55. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, further comprising a remote control, including a control for pausing the digital content.

56. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 55, wherein:
the remote control includes a wireless transmitter, operative to transmit a code to the access system indicating that a user has activated the control for pausing; and
the access system includes a wireless receiver, operative to receive the code from the remote control and pause a delivery of the digital content.

57. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 55, the remote control further including a control for resuming the digital content.

58. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 57, wherein:

the remote control includes a wireless transmitter, operative to transmit a code to the access system indicating that a user has activated the controls for resuming; and

the access system includes a wireless receiver, operative to receive the code from the remote control and resume a delivery of the digital content.

59. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 1, further comprising a remote control, including a control for rewinding the digital content.

60. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 59, wherein:
the remote control includes a wireless transmitter, operative to transmit a code to the access system indicating that a user has activated the control for rewinding; and

the access system includes a wireless receiver, operative to receive the code from the remote control and rewind a delivery of the digital content.

61. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 11, wherein the handset includes a control for pausing the digital content.

62. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 61, wherein:
the handset includes a wireless transmitter, operative to transmit a code to the access system indicating that a user has activated the control for pausing; and

the set-top box includes a wireless receiver, operative to receive the code from the remote control and suspend access to the digital content.

63. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 61, wherein the handset further includes a control for resuming the digital content.

64. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 63, wherein:
the handset includes a wireless transmitter, operative to transmit a code to the access system indicating that a user has activated the control for resuming; and

the set-top box includes a wireless receiver, operative to receive the code from the remote control and resume access to the digital content.

65. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 11, wherein the handset includes a control for rewinding the digital content.

66. (Previously Presented) A system according to claim 65, wherein:
the handset includes a wireless transmitter, operative to transmit a code to the access system indicating that a user has activated the control for rewinding; and
the set-top box includes a wireless receiver, operative to receive the code from the remote control and rewind the digital content.

67. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, further comprising:
receiving a signal to pause the delivery of the digital content; and
pausing the access and delivery of the digital content to the unit.

68. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 67, wherein receiving a signal includes receiving the signal to pause the delivery of the digital content from a remote control.

69. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 68, wherein receiving the signal to pause the delivery of the digital content from a remote control includes receiving a wireless signal to pause the delivery of the digital content from the remote control.

70. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 67, wherein pausing the access and delivery includes suspending the access of the digital content from the memory on the server.

71. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 67, further comprising:
receiving a signal to resume the delivery of the digital content; and
resuming the access and delivery of the digital content to the unit.

72. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 71, wherein receiving a signal includes receiving the signal to resume the delivery of the digital content from a remote control.

73. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 72, wherein receiving the signal to resume the delivery of the digital content from a remote control includes receiving a wireless signal to resume the delivery of the digital content from the remote control.

74. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 71, wherein resuming the access and delivery includes:
determining a point in the memory on the server the digital content was last accessed; and
accessing the digital content from the memory on the server, starting at the point in the memory on the server.

75. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, further comprising:
receiving a signal to rewind the digital content;
rewinding a part of the digital content; and
continuing delivery of the digital content to the unit from a start of the rewound part of the digital content.

76. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 75, wherein receiving a signal includes receiving the signal to rewind the digital content from a remote control.

77. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 76, wherein receiving the signal to rewind the digital content from a remote control includes receiving a wireless signal to rewind the digital content from the remote control.

78. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 37, further comprising:
receiving at the set-top box a signal to pause the delivery of the digital content; and
pausing the access and delivery of the digital content to the unit.

79. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 78, wherein receiving at the set-top box a signal includes receiving at the set-top box the signal to pause the delivery of the digital content from a remote control.

80. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 79, wherein receiving at the set-top box the signal to pause the delivery of the digital content from a remote control includes receiving at the set-top box a wireless signal to pause the delivery of the digital content from the remote control.

81. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 78, further comprising:
receiving at the set-top box a signal to resume the delivery of the digital content; and
resuming the access and delivery of the digital content to the unit.

82. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 81, wherein receiving at the set-top box a signal includes receiving at the set-top box the signal to resume the delivery of the digital content from a remote control.

83. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 82, wherein receiving at the set-top box the signal to resume the delivery of the digital content from a remote control includes receiving at the set-top box a wireless signal to resume the delivery of the digital content from the remote control.

84. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 37, further comprising:
receiving at the set-top box a signal to rewind the digital content; and
rewinding the digital content to the unit.

85. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 84, wherein receiving at the set-top box a signal includes receiving at the set-top box the signal to rewind the digital content from a remote control.

86. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 85, wherein receiving at the set-top box the signal to rewind the digital content from a remote control includes receiving at the set-top box a wireless signal to rewind the digital content from the remote control.

87. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein accessing the default rate further comprises:

- accessing a default product rate for the digital content;
- accessing a default category rate for the digital content;
- providing the default product rate or the default category rate as the default rate based on an existence of the default product rate.

88. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein accessing the default rate further comprises:

- accessing a custom product rate for the digital content;
- accessing a custom category rate for the digital content;
- providing the custom product rate or the custom category rate as the custom rate based on an existence of the custom product rate.

89. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein selecting the default rate or the custom rate for the digital content further comprises:

- comparing the rate key of the user profile with rate keys in a product billing rate table, the product billing rate table indicating an association of rate keys and custom rates;
- selecting the default rate if the rate key of the user profile is not in the product billing rate table; and
- selecting the custom rate associated with the rate key of the user profile if the rate key of the user profile is in the product billing rate table.

90. (New) The method of claim 46, wherein applying a discount to the selected rate further comprises:

comparing the discount rate key of the user profile with discount rate keys in a product discount table, the product discount table indicating an association of discount rate keys and discounts; and

applying a discount associated with the discount rate key if the discount rate key is in the product discount table.

91. (New) The method of claim 45, further comprising:

identifying a user of the unit, wherein the user profile is associated with the user;
requesting the user profile from a different multiple unit environment; and
receiving the user profile.

92. (New) The method of claim 34, further comprising:

storing a plurality of user profiles;
monitoring accesses to the user profiles;
identifying common characteristics of accessed user profiles;
adjusting availability of the digitized content in response to the identified common characteristics.

93. (New) The method of claim 92, wherein identifying the common characteristics of accessed user profiles further comprises:

monitoring a percentage of the accessed user profiles that include a particular characteristic; and

identifying the particular characteristic as an identified common characteristic if the percentage is greater than a threshold.